United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.15

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
15th meeting
Monday, 16 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: U Mya Than (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 65 to 81 *(continued)*

Thematic discussion on item subjects; introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security items

Mr. Paturej (Poland): Since I am taking the floor for the first time at this session of the First Committee, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Committee.

On behalf of Canada and Poland, I wish to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.18, entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The main purposes of this draft remain the same as in previous years, namely to confirm the determination of the world community to achieve the effective prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction, and to support the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention. The draft therefore raises the most important issues relating to the achievement of the main objectives of the Convention.

The draft emphasizes the necessity of universal adherence to the Convention and calls upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention without delay.

It notes with appreciation the ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to achieve the objectives and purposes of the Convention. It stresses the importance of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in verifying compliance with the provisions of the Convention as well as promoting the timely and efficient accomplishment of all its objectives.

The draft also stresses the vital importance of full and effective implementation of, and compliance with, all provisions of the Convention, and it urges all States parties to the Convention to meet in full and on time their obligations under the Convention and to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in its implementation activities.

The draft stresses the importance to the Convention that all possessors of chemical weapons, chemical weapons production facilities or chemical weapons development facilities, including previously declared possessor States, should be among the States parties to the Convention, and welcomes progress to that end.

In the draft, we welcome the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the signature of the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the Organization, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention. We also propose to include in the provisional agenda of the fifty-sixth

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session the item entitled "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The draft resolution does not raise, consider or assess any issues concerning the implementation of the provisions of the Convention. There is a broad consensus among delegations in the First Committee that issues related to the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention will be discussed in their entirety at The Hague, at the headquarters of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

It is with great pleasure that I can inform the Committee that this draft resolution received the appreciation and support of all of the delegations that participated in the intensive preparatory work carried out in recent days.

Delegations also expressed their understanding and support for the draft and for the established practice of having the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention introduced by Canada and Poland.

The work accomplished confirmed the full support and determination of all delegations to achieve the effective prohibition of the development, production, acquisition, transfer, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons and their destruction. The ongoing work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague to implement the Chemical Weapons Convention was also noted and fully supported.

I should like to emphasize the very good atmosphere and the openness and support prevailing among the members of the First Committee during the consultations. This businesslike atmosphere and the positive attitude of all delegations created a sound basis for the adoption without a vote of this draft resolution on "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

The desire for cooperation and mutual understanding and the search for a consensus have remained the main objectives of Canadian and Polish endeavours in the process of working on this draft resolution.

I wish, on behalf of Canada and Poland, to thank all the delegations that participated in the consultations for their understanding and valuable input and for the support expressed during our common work. That positive atmosphere and the support expressed for the chemical weapons ban and for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, as well as the valuable input and ideas of delegations, are all elements I will bring back to The Hague.

I wish to stress that the support of the members of the First Committee and of the United Nations creates an important positive incentive for continuing our efforts to implement all of the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention and to move forward towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Finally, I wish to thank the delegation of Canada for its continued support and valuable cooperation in the process of the work on this draft resolution.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation extends its appreciation to the representative of Poland for introducing the draft resolution before the Committee. This draft is well focused in its emphasis on the role of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in achieving the objectives and purposes of the Convention. At the same time, it addresses the issues of universality and compliance in a forward-looking way.

The Chemical Weapons Convention has a unique status among multilateral disarmament treaties, and seeks to ban an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that its successful implementation will result in the total elimination of chemical weapons around the world, and eventually contribute to achieving the ultimate goal of freeing the world from other weapons of mass destruction. My delegation therefore supports this important draft resolution and hopes that it will be adopted by consensus, as it was last year.

Mr. Baali (Algeria): My delegation has asked for the floor to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/55/L.7 on the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The Review Conference was the first since the Treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995. Following a preparatory process that commenced in April 1997, 158 States parties met in April and May this year for the

purpose of reviewing the operation of the Treaty, taking into account the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

The outcome of the 2000 NPT Conference is widely known. The States parties to the NPT reached a full consensus on a Final Document presenting their deliberations on the Treaty's past and future — the first time they had done so in 15 years and the third time in the history of the NPT review process. They managed to evaluate the results of the period since 1995, including the implementation by States parties of their obligations under the Treaty, and to identify areas in which, and the means through which, further progress will be sought in the future, including strengthening the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and the achievement of its universality.

The balanced review of the implementation of the Treaty's provisions since the Treaty's indefinite extension in 1995 and the agreement on realistic and practical steps to further advance the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to strengthen cooperation in the peaceful application of nuclear energy, as well as the agreement on improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process for the Treaty, are, indeed, remarkable achievements.

Considering that the political environment was far from auspicious for a successful Review Conference, owing to the absence of meaningful nuclear disarmament during the period following the Treaty's indefinite extension in 1995, the outcome of the Conference was a hard-won success that exceeded everyone's expectations.

Having had the honour and the privilege to preside over the 2000 Review Conference, I thought it appropriate that at its fifty-fifth session the General Assembly should welcome the results of the Conference jointly arrived at by the States parties to the Treaty. The intention of my delegation was, therefore, to present a procedural draft resolution that would allow the General Assembly to welcome the Final Document of the Conference, which was adopted by consensus. In presenting the draft resolution, I am also following past practice.

My delegation has consulted widely on the draft resolution, and I would like to thank all delegations for the cooperation extended to us. I should also like to state for the record that many delegations expressed their desire to join in sponsoring the draft resolution but they graciously stood aside to permit my delegation to hold the consultations and finalize the draft resolution. I appreciate their cooperation and wish to express my sincere thanks to all of them.

The draft resolution is a short one, containing only one operative paragraph. In adopting the draft resolution, the General Assembly would welcome the adoption by consensus on 19 May 2000 of the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, including in particular the documents in Volume I, Part I, entitled "Review of the operation of the Treaty, taking into account the decisions and the resolution adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference" and "Improving the effectiveness of the strengthened review process for the Treaty".

I would like to stress that, following past practice, the draft resolution before the members of the Committee this year does not contain any reference to the preparatory process for the next review conference, which is to commence in 2002. This will be the subject of a resolution at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, following consultations among the States parties to the Treaty.

My delegation is very well aware of the fact that among us there are States that are not parties to the Treaty. Notwithstanding their position, my delegation hopes that those States will permit the draft resolution to be adopted without a vote. However, if there is a request for a vote, my delegation earnestly requests the States parties to the Treaty, who represent the overwhelming majority of the international community, to vote in favour of the draft resolution.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to make a statement to express my views on nuclear disarmament. With regard to international security, there has recently been a series of negative developments that have given rise to concerns among peace-loving people about the prospects for nuclear disarmament. Although the decision to deploy a national missile defence system has been delayed, that plan has not been abandoned and is still being pushed ahead. The Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which has for many years underpinned the international strategic balance and stability, is in danger of being undermined. If this happens, the necessary basis for achieving

nuclear disarmament will no longer exist, the sense of insecurity and distrust among States will be increased and the process of disarmament will stagnate and may even be reversed, leading to a new global arms race.

The Final Document adopted by consensus at the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) contains a summary of the situation regarding nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy since the 1995 Review Conference, and sets out the programme of action in those areas for the next five years so as to serve as positive guide for the promotion of our work in the future.

During the recent NPT Review Conference, the five nuclear-weapon States issued a joint statement in which they elaborated a common denominator position in the areas of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They also undertook not to target their national nuclear weapons against any other State. This was one of the most important factors contributing to the Conference's success.

In order to attain the goal of the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date in the new century, we must overcome the negative factors and ensure that nuclear disarmament move forward in the right direction. In this connection, the Chinese delegation believes that it is vitally important that all States strive to observe the following principles and specific steps: first, the countries with the largest nuclear arsenals should shoulder their special and prime responsibility for nuclear disarmament; they should significantly and irreversibly reduce their respective nuclear arsenals. Countries with deployed nuclear weapons should withdraw all their nuclear weapons back to their own territory. The policies and practices of the nuclear umbrella and nuclear sharing should be abolished.

Secondly, all nuclear-weapon States should unequivocally and unconditionally undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. They should conclude a legally binding international legal instrument to that effect.

Thirdly, the promotion of measures relating to nuclear disarmament can not succeed unless international strategic stability is ensured. What is most important now, in that regard, is that the ABM Treaty be strictly observed. The countries concerned must comply with this Treaty and other legal instruments until arms control and disarmament have been reached. In that connection they must refrain from research and development and the deployment of a nuclear defence system that undermines global strategic balance and stability and from helping other countries to obtain such a system. They should not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries by spreading advanced anti-ballistic systems and technology and undermining other countries' sovereignty and territorial integrity. The international community also needs to conclude, through negotiation, a legal instrument on the complete prohibition of an arms race in outer space and of the militarization of outer space.

Fourthly, all countries should strive to urge countries that have not joined the NPT to join it, so as to promote an early coming into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Conference on Disarmament, on the basis of a comprehensive and balanced programme of work, should start early negotiations for the conclusion of a multilateral, non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable treaty on the prohibition of fissile materials used for nuclear weapons. These measures are aimed at preventing the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons, so as to create the necessary conditions for the eventual removal of all nuclear weapons.

Fifthly, the nuclear-weapon States should, on the basis of their commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, conclude a convention banning the use of nuclear weapons. History shows that the international community started first with treaties banning the use of chemical and biological weapons before entering into negotiations for the conclusion of the CWC and the BWC. By the same token, in order to completely eliminate nuclear weapons we should also start banning the use of nuclear weapons.

Sixthly, on the basis of the aforementioned five points and on the basis of the principles of maintaining international strategic stability and of ensuring that the security of all countries is undiminished, we should start negotiations for the conclusion of a convention on the complete prohibition of nuclear weapons.

China is determined to follow a course of promoting all the aforementioned norms and measures.

My delegation will also, in keeping with the position of principle, support all proposals and propositions that are conducive to the early achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. On this basis we will determine our position when we come to the vote on the draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament.

The Chairman: We go to the second phase of our work — namely, thematic discussion on subjects under the items on the agenda, as well as the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions — in a very flexible programme. Any delegation that so wishes may take the floor and address any subject on the list that we have submitted to the delegations.

Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage?

This does not appear to be the case.

The meeting rose at 3.40 p.m.